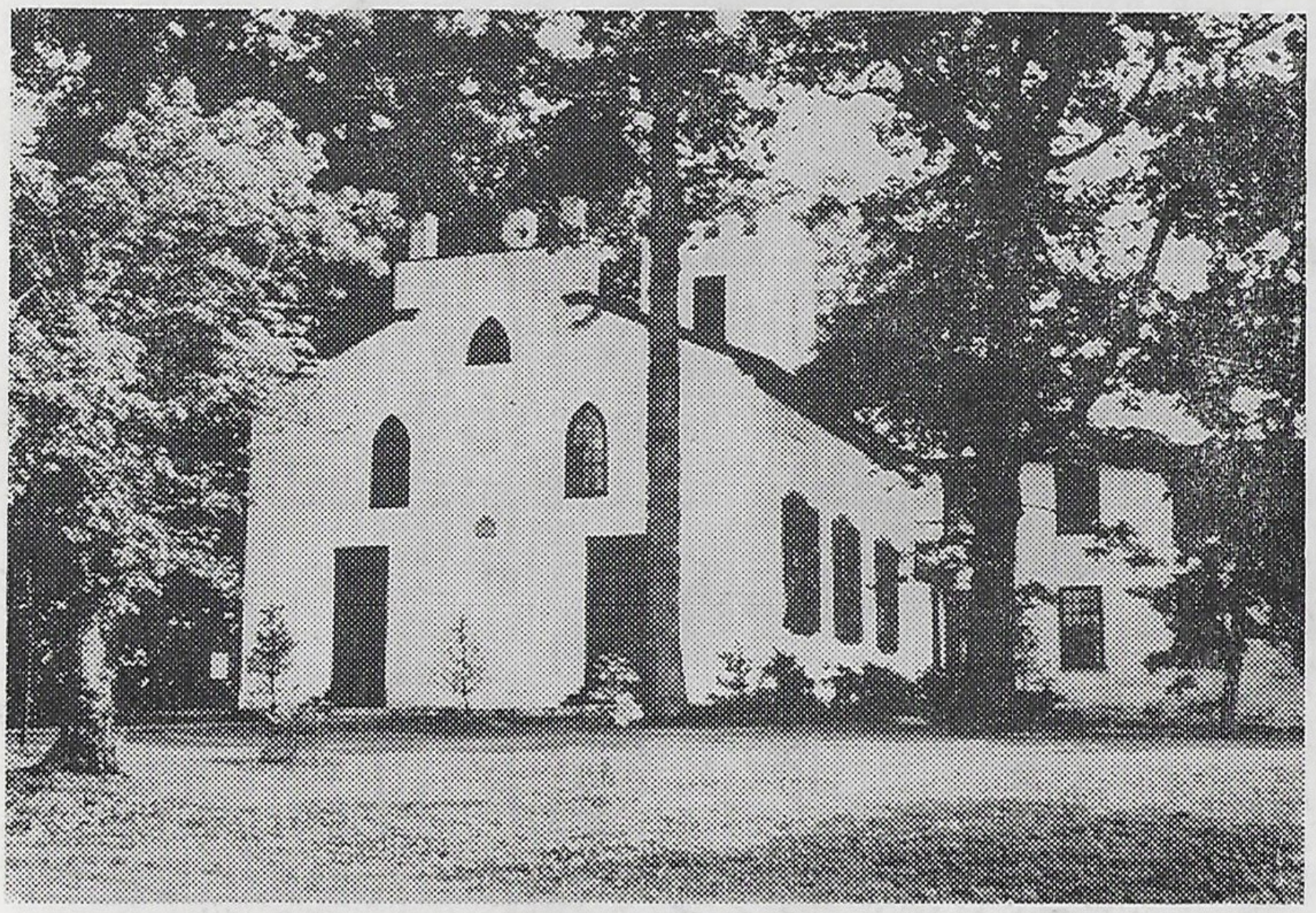
250th Anniversary

1700 – 1950

St. James' Episcopal Church

Perkiomen

R. D. 2, Collegeville, Pa.



RECTOR

THE REV. NATHANAEL B. GROTON, D.D.

VICAR

THE REV. EDWARD PLATTS

SUNDAY SERVICES

9:30 CHURCH SCHOOL

10:45 MORNING WORSHIP
(Holy Communion on first Sunday)

8:00 HOLY COMMUNION
(Last Sunday of the Month)

ST. JAMES', PERKIOMEN

At the crossroads of Germantown Pike and the old Evansburg Road stands St. James' Episcopal Church, a white plastered-stone building characteristic of the Pennsylvania countryside in which it has stood since 1843. Surrounded by spacious lawns and shaded by large old oaks, younger trees, and shrubs, it presents a picture of simple dignity.

Many-paned clear glass windows, framed by dark green shutters, accent the simplicity of the building. A square white belfry tower, above the sacristy, houses a bell, commemorating the sons of the parish who lost their lives in the Civil War.

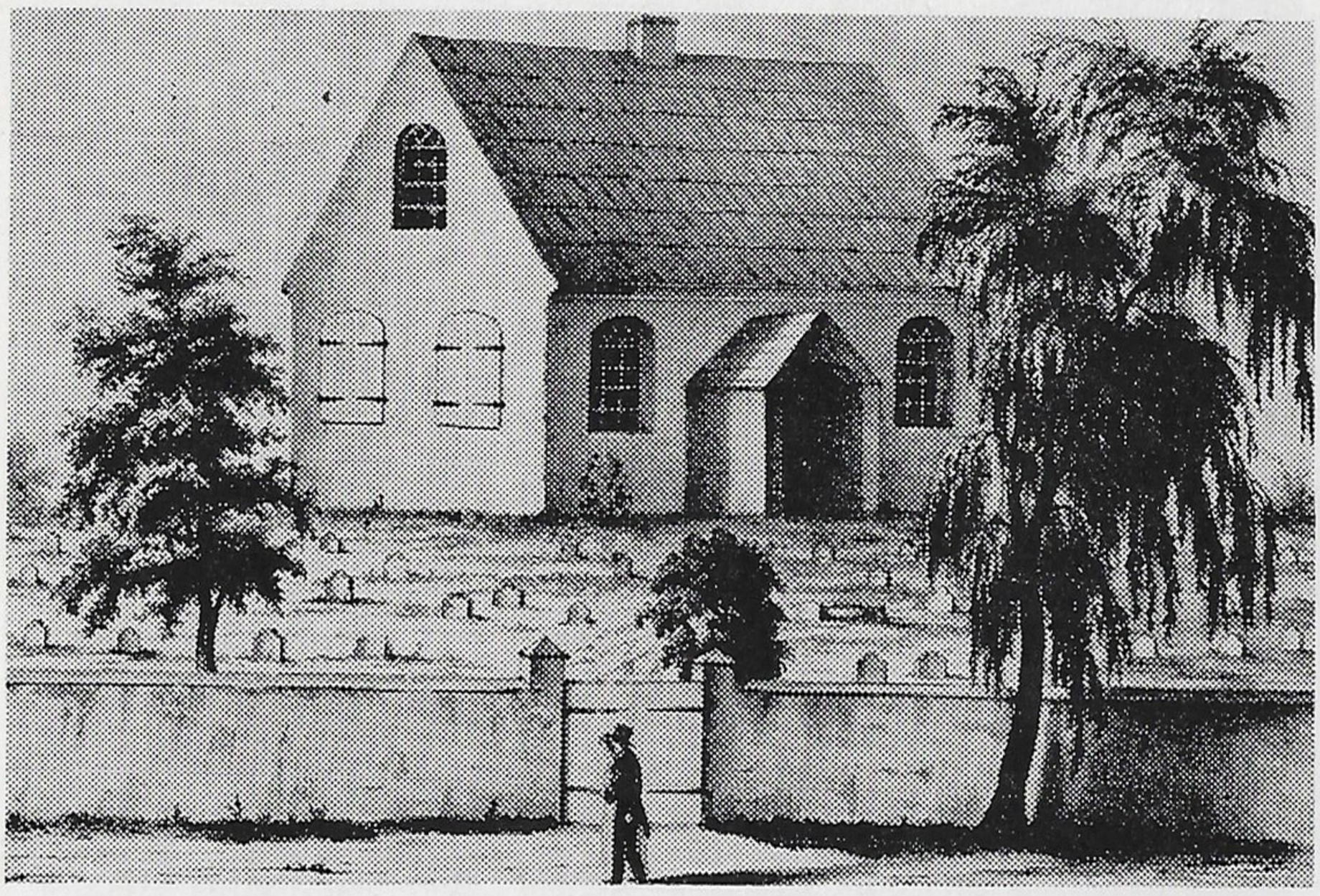
The lovely interior is marked by the charm and beauty of an earlier era. White predominates, except for the walnut trim on the pews and the doors which enclose them. Red carpet, covering the floor, adds pleasant contrast.

The communion table, hewn out of walnut, dates from colonial days. Over the Holy Table on the paneled wall is a lovely reproduction of Da Vinci's "Last Supper."

At the font are candle holders made of wood from the shutters of a former church. On the gallery hangs a replica of Queen Anne's Arms.

1700

Shortly before 1700, English and Welsh settlers, headed by Edward Lane, had built homes in the section of Penn's Woods known as 'Perquihoma.' To this area came Missionaries sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the first of these being the Rev. Evan Evans of Christ Church, Philadelphia. A log church was erected opposite the present St. James.'



COLONIAL DAYS

About 1721, a stone church was built to replace the log building which, together with all its records, had burned. The combined Bible and Prayer Book used in this church, and still extant, was a gift of the 'Society.' In use also was a pewter communion service, the gift of Queen Anne, which unfortunately was stolen in 1739. This was replaced by communion vessels of Sheffieldware, still in the possession of the church.

The first Vestry Minute Book is in the care of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, and in it are the names of the colonial rectors, among whom are the Rev. Messrs. Evans, Weyman, Howie, Hughes, and Currie. These men also served other colonial parishes, such as St. David's, Radnor, Trinity, Oxford, and St. Thomas', Whitemarsh.

REVOLUTIONARY DAYS

After Washington retreated northward through Warwick and across the Schuylkill, following the battle of the Brandywine, he set up camp on both sides of the Perkiomen Creek, with headquarters in the

Casselberry house, a short distance from the church, on the Evansburg Road. On the morning of September 20, 1777, before the battle of Germantown, he held a council of war in the study of St. James' Rectory.

Retreating from this encounter, he hospitalized many wounded soldiers in the old stone church, and buried 150 continental dead in the surrounding church yard. Among these graves is that of Captain Vachel D. Howard, Washington's officer and acquaintance.

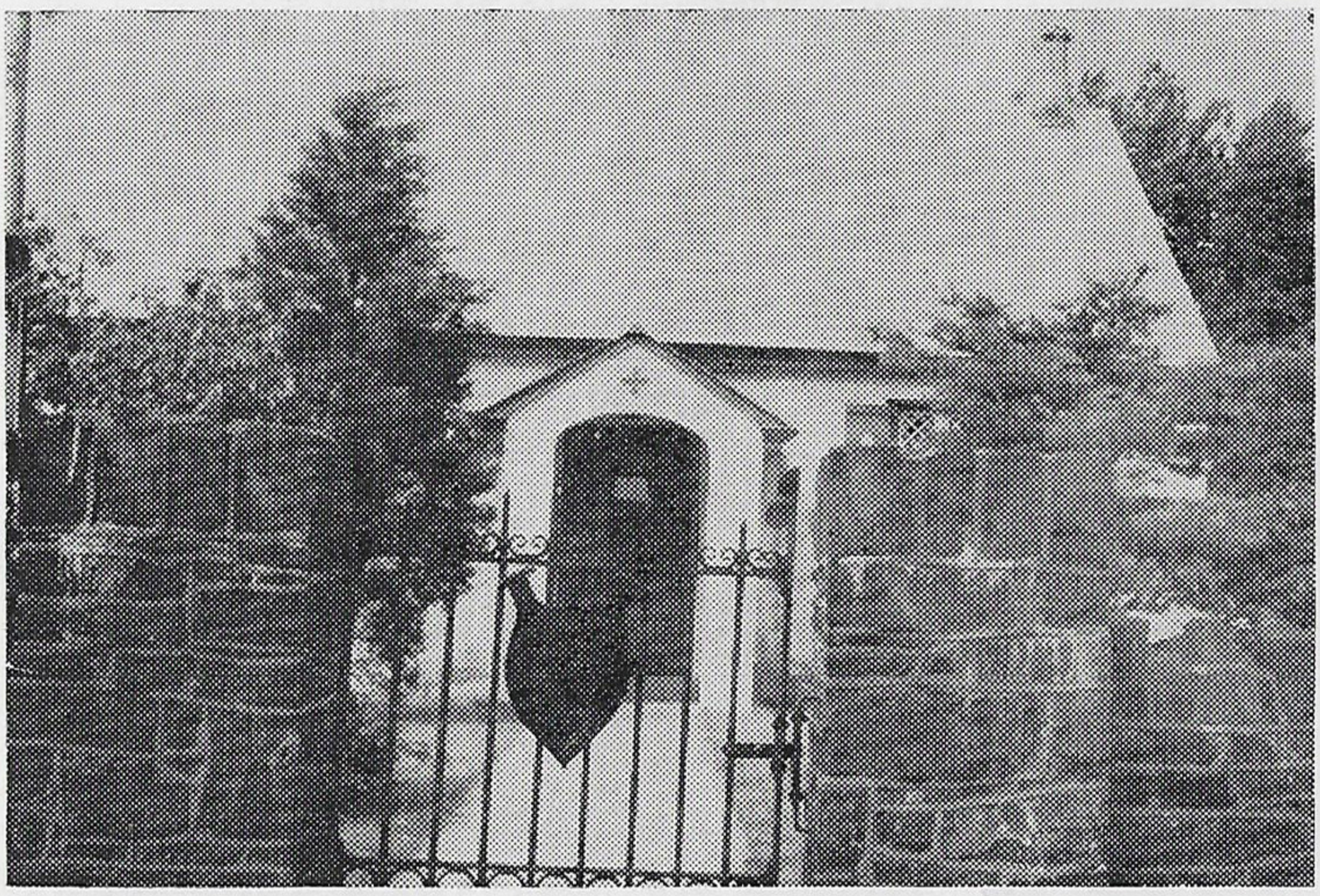
After the war St. James' was one of the five churches which sent delegates to the convention in Philadelphia that organized the diocese of Pennsylvania. Another interesting note of those days is an item from the diary of the Rev. Slater Clay which states, "I do not use the word 'obey' in the marriage service, I do not want to make the dear ladies tell lies."

THE RECTORY

Once called the Glebe House, St. James' Rectory was acquired by the church before 1737, and enlarged about 1832 during the Rectorship of the Rev.

John Reynolds, the great grandfather of the present Bishop of Pennsylvania, the Rt. Rev. Oliver J. Hart, D. D.

It is separated from the church by a paved road and meadow and stands on lands bequeathed by William Lane in 1733 to "St. James', situated in Providence."



THE SCHOOLHOUSE

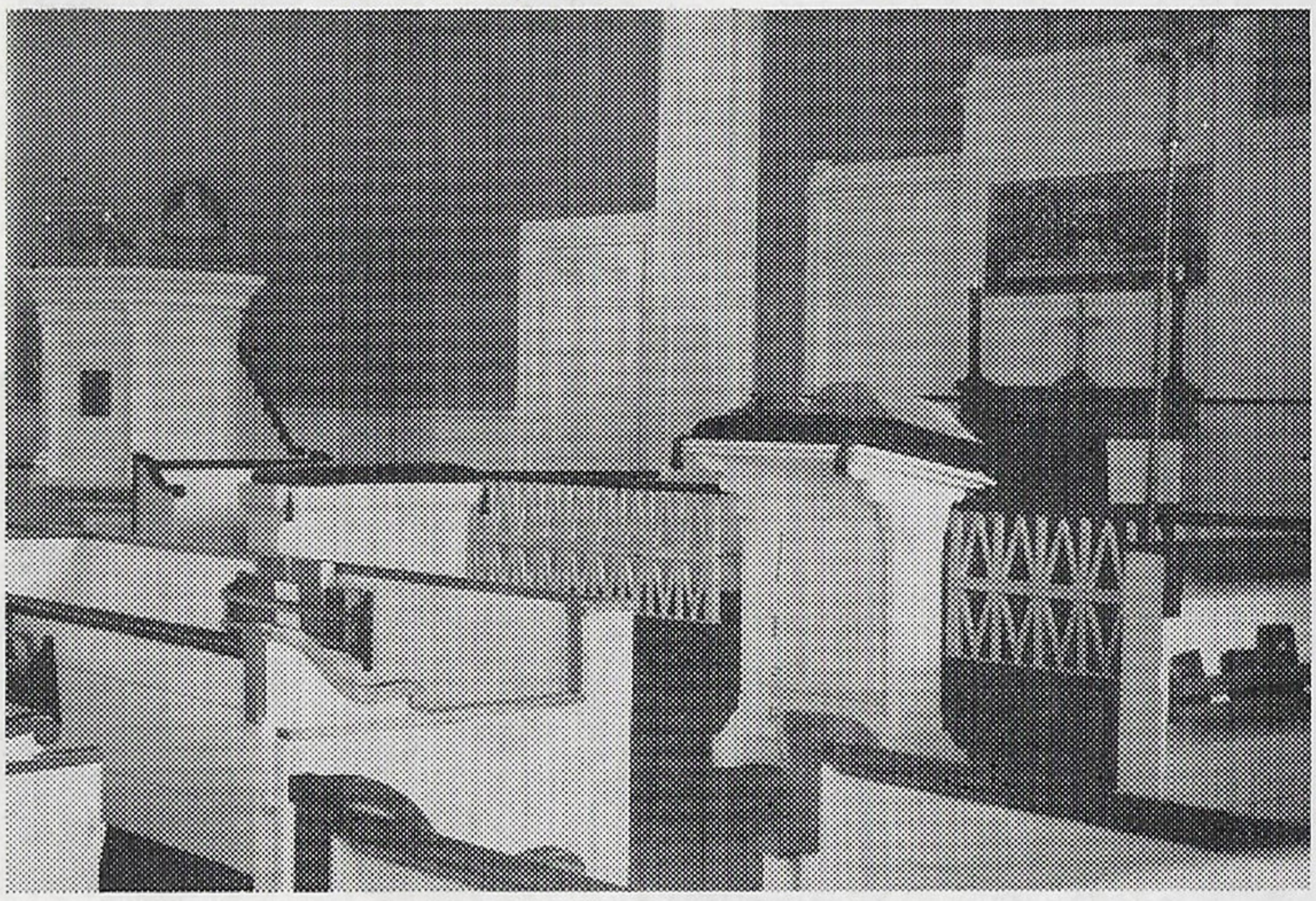
Across the road from St. James', in the walled church-yard, stands the building which was once the local centre of education. In this schoolhouse the clergy, and other teachers provided by the 'Society', gave instruction to the young. This building was later rented by the public school system until the classes became too large. At the present time St. James' church sponsors a community library in it.

The surrounding church yard contains many tombstones of interest. The oldest legible stone is that of Susanna Leubacher, inscribed in German and English and dated 1723.

THE PRESENT

Since the turn of the century St. James' has had a period of ups and downs until the Rev. Nathanael B. Groton, of St. Thomas' Church, Whitemarsh, assumed charge of it in 1929. His Assistants and laymen have ministered to St. James'. The present Assistant, Vicar of this parish since 1941, is the Rev. Edward Platts.

During these years much has been accomplished. The church, rectory, grounds, and churchyard have been put in excellent condition. All debts have been paid. The membership of the parish has steadily increased, and spiritual interest has grown greatly. There is every expectation that St. James', Perkiomen, will soon be able to resume independent status and continue to do its full share in the work of the Kingdom.



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